



PRESS RELEASE

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FORMER U.S. BORDER PATROL AGENT PLEADS GUILTY TO ACCEPTING BRIBES

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona, announced today that Eduardo Rivas, 28, a former United States Border Patrol Agent, formerly assigned to the Naco, Arizona Station, pled guilty to Bribery, Possession with Intent to Distribute Cocaine and Carrying of a Firearm During a Drug Trafficking Crime, in federal district court in Tucson, Arizona.

At his change of plea hearing today before United States Magistrate Judge Nancy Fiora, Rivas signed a plea agreement admitting to the following facts:

Beginning on or about March 31, 2001, I agreed to accept bribes in exchange for my agreement to assist in the safe passage of marijuana near Palominas, Arizona, near the United States/Mexico border where I was employed by the United States of America as a United States Border Patrol agent. On April 6, 2001, I agreed to assist in escorting what I believed to be a vehicle loaded with drugs through that area, and on April 13, 2001, accepted a bribe payment of \$5,000 for this activity. I knew it was illegal to solicit and accept bribe payments in exchange for violating my official duties as a United States Border Patrol agent.

On May 27, 2001, while off-duty as a United States Border Patrol agent, I met with an undercover agent near Benson, Arizona, in order to transport cocaine to Phoenix, Arizona. I got into the undercover agent's sports utility vehicle, displayed my United States Border Patrol issued handgun and badge, and indicated to him that I was ready to transport drugs. I accepted 20 kilograms of cocaine from the undercover agent, transported it to Phoenix, Arizona in a vehicle, where I met with the undercover agent in a hotel room and delivered the drugs back to him. I knew it was illegal to possess cocaine with intent to deliver it to another, and to possess a handgun during the commission of that crime.

Bribery is a violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 201(b)(2)(C), and carries a maximum penalty of 15 years incarceration, a \$250,000 fine or both. Possession with intent to distribute cocaine is a violation of Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1), and carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment, a \$4 million fine or both. Carrying of a firearm during a drug trafficking crime carries a penalty of five years incarceration, a \$250,000 fine or both.

Sentencing is set before Judge John M. Roll on Thursday, May 9, 2002.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Southern Arizona Corruption Task Force, which includes agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Customs Service Internal Affairs, United States Drug Enforcement Administration, Department of Justice Office of Inspector General, and the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division.

The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant United States Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

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